



Put In Your 2¢ Worth...

About 2¢ a drink yields \$44 million annually to reduce the impact of alcohol problems in Missouri.

Question:

Some legislators have suggested that we “levy a tax on alcohol abusers,” rather than a tax on all drinkers. Why impose a “two-cents-worth” impact fee on ALL drinkers?

Answer:

- (1) Defining “abuse”, short of a formal assessment or diagnosis, presents a problem.
- (2) Determining the amount and the occasion for the “tax” would be very difficult.
- (3) The impact fee comes very close to the proposal because the amount “paid” is determined by the amount consumed. This assumes that the industry will pass along the surcharge to consumers. If it does not do so, there is no effect on consumers at all.

MISSOURI ALCOHOL IMPACT FACT #8

In Missouri, 47% of all persons age 12 or older do not drink at all or drink infrequently. ⁽¹⁾ The bulk of the state’s supply of alcoholic beverages is consumed by a relatively small population of “heavy” drinkers:

The top 2.5% of drinkers, by volume, i.e. the heaviest drinkers, account for about 25% of alcohol purchased and consumed.

The top 5% of drinkers account for about 40%.

The top 10% of drinkers account for about 50%.

The top 20% account for about 90%.

The top one-third account for over 95% of alcohol purchased and consumed. ⁽²⁾

- (1) USDHSS, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Office of Applied Studies, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2002. The survey asks about “past month use.”
- (2) Greenfield, T.K. and Rogers, J.D., “Who Drinks Most of the Alcohol in the U.S.? The Policy Implications,” Journal of Studies on Alcohol, January, 1999. It is assumed that patterns of consumption by Missourians do not differ greatly from national patterns.

The Coalition believes that an alcohol impact fee would have no effect at all on almost half of adult Missourians and a two-cent surcharge would have a minimal effect on purchasing or sale of alcoholic beverages by those who choose to drink.

For more information call one of the Missouri’s Alcohol Impact Coalition members below:

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